



GMP Newsletter No. 2

Planning Team Develops Preliminary Draft Management Alternatives

The Castillo de San Marcos planning team recently completed work on four preliminary concepts for the long-term management of the national monument. These management concepts provide a range of alternatives for resource protection and visitor enjoyment for the next 15-20 years. This newsletter presents a summary of the principal features of each alternative as well as maps showing each respective management zone configuration.

The alternatives are not final. They are being distributed to our partners, neighbors, and stakeholders so that the National Park Service can benefit from your review and comment prior to the development and distribution of the formal public review draft of the General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement.

Please tell us what you think. Use the enclosed response card to provide us with your comments. No postage is necessary. Simply fold and staple or tape closed the completed card and drop it in a mail box. We would appreciate your comments by January 31, 2005 to be considered in this phase of the planning project.

There will be additional opportunities to comment on the alternatives as we continue the planning process. The draft GMP/EIS will be made available to the public and distributed for review. The NPS will also conduct public meetings to receive additional comments. We look forward to hearing from you.



Castillo de San Marcos National Monument – Aerial view looking NNE.

About Castillo de San Marcos

Castillo de San Marcos National Monument comprises 20.48 acres in St. Augustine, St. Johns County, Florida. The park lies north of St. Augustine's central plaza and fronts Matanzas Bay. Built as the northernmost Spanish stronghold in the southeastern United States and as a defense against pirate attacks on St. Augustine, the Castillo was originally located at the northern edge of the city, where it commanded the land and sea routes into the settlement. Today, colonial St. Augustine extends south of the monument, while the modern city has grown around this core in all directions.

The city of St. Augustine lies on the eastern coastal plain of Florida. It is a low-lying, sandy area protected from the sea by a

number of barrier islands. The San Sebastián River runs west of the city and formed a natural boundary for the colony early in its history. A seawall and water battery separate Castillo de San Marcos from the waters of Matanzas Bay on the fort's east side. The site of the Castillo is a rolling, grassy area sprinkled with a few trees. The outer portions of the grounds are flat up to the glacis, which slopes upward toward the fort and roughly follows the contour of the moat and covered way. The park area is irregular in shape, with much of its western boundary following the contour of State Road A-1-A. West of the fort, beginning at the bottom of the glacis near the northwest bastion, is the reconstructed Cubo Line. The defense work runs west from the glacis to the City Gate.

Alternative A

General Theme

This alternative would restore and maintain the historic character and appearance of the fort and the historic landscape to the greatest achievable degree of authenticity. It would emphasize protecting the Castillo as much as possible from modern intrusions.

Visitor Experience

The visitor would have extensive opportunities to experience the feeling and setting of being in the historical period through:

- Nearly total restoration of the fort's casemates and landscape. Removal of restrooms from fort and relocation to new visitor center; and
- Living history, period crafts, and technology demonstrations.

Resource Conditions

- Enhance the view of the fort at the Sally port by removing the ticket booth. Relocate the ticket sales function to a new visitor center.
- Remove all non-historic uses including the restrooms from the fort casemates.
- Restore majority of the casemates to their historic appearance. Relocate the maintenance function and equipment off-site. Administrative offices would either move off-site or co-locate in the new visitor center.
- Restore the glacis into the area of current visitor parking. Parking would be available in the parking area adjacent to the current maintenance compound. Additional parking would be available across the street in the city's planned new parking garage.

Visitor Center

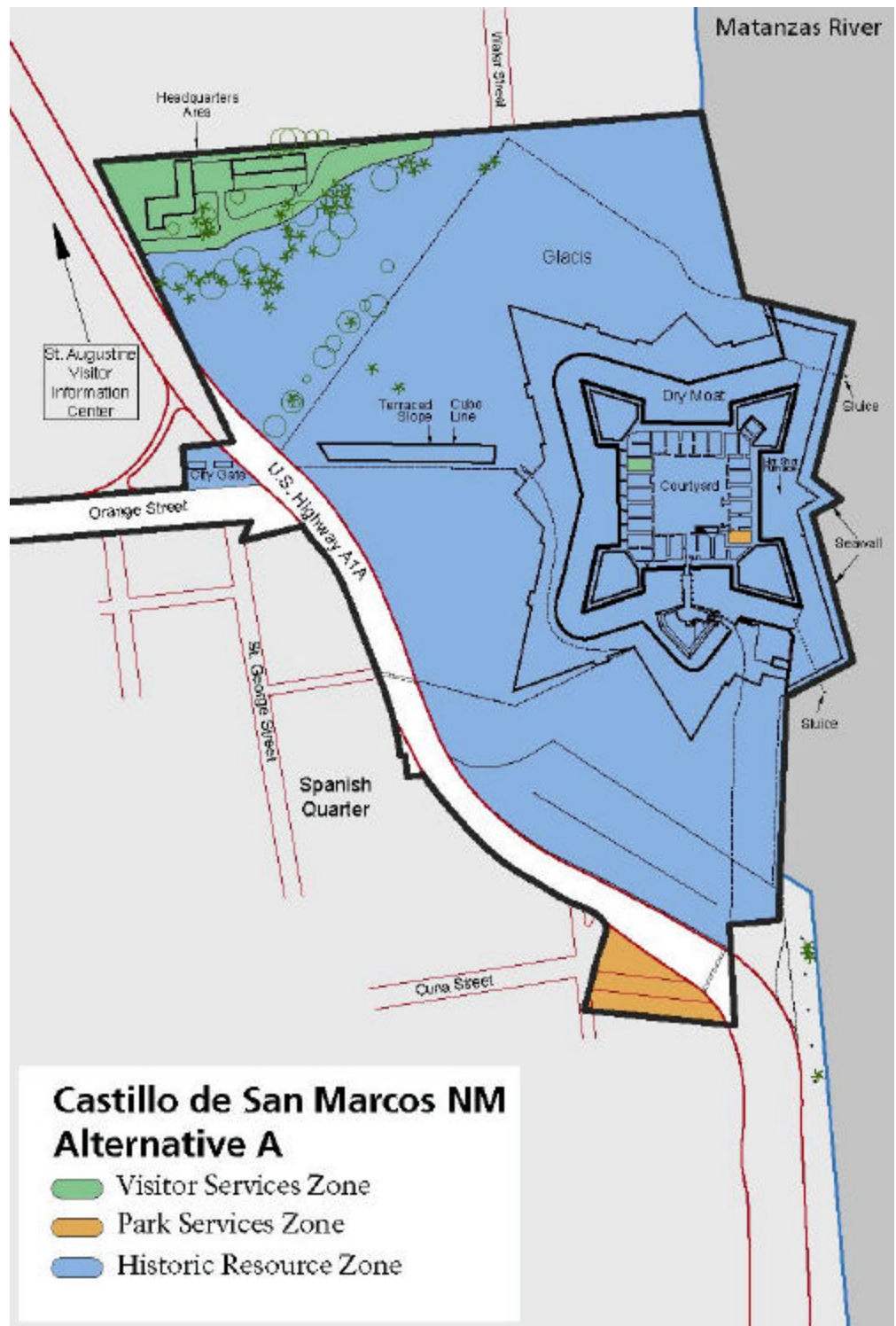
- Locate a new visitor orientation and information center in the area of the current administrative offices.
- Adapt existing headquarters structure or build a new facility.

Parking

- Remove existing parking lot. Restore the glacis and fort green in its place.
- Locate new, probably smaller parking lot near the new visitor center in a previously disturbed area.
- Additional visitor parking would be available in new city parking facilities behind the St. Augustine Visitor Information Center.



In this alternative, the ticket booth (right) would be removed and ticket sales would occur in a new visitor center where the current park administrative offices are located (left).



Alternative B

General Theme

This alternative would restore and maintain the historic character of the fort and the historic landscape to the greatest degree feasible within the limitations imposed by operational efficiency and visitor convenience.

Visitor Experience

The visitor would have many opportunities to experience the feeling and setting of the historical period through:

- Restoration of some of the fort's casemates and partial restoration of the historic landscape; and
- Living history, costumed interpretation, period crafts, and technology demonstrations.

Resource Conditions

- Enhance the view of the fort at the sally port by removing the ticket booth. Relocate the ticket sales function to a new visitor contact station.
- Remove some non-historic administrative functions from the fort. Restrooms remain in the fort.
- Restore some of the casemates to their historic appearance. Maintenance and administrative offices remain in current location at the north end of the site.
- Partially restore the glacis into the area of current visitor parking. The remainder of the current parking lot site would be available for the visitor contact station that is part of this alternative. Parking would be available across the street in the city's planned new parking garage.

Visitor Center

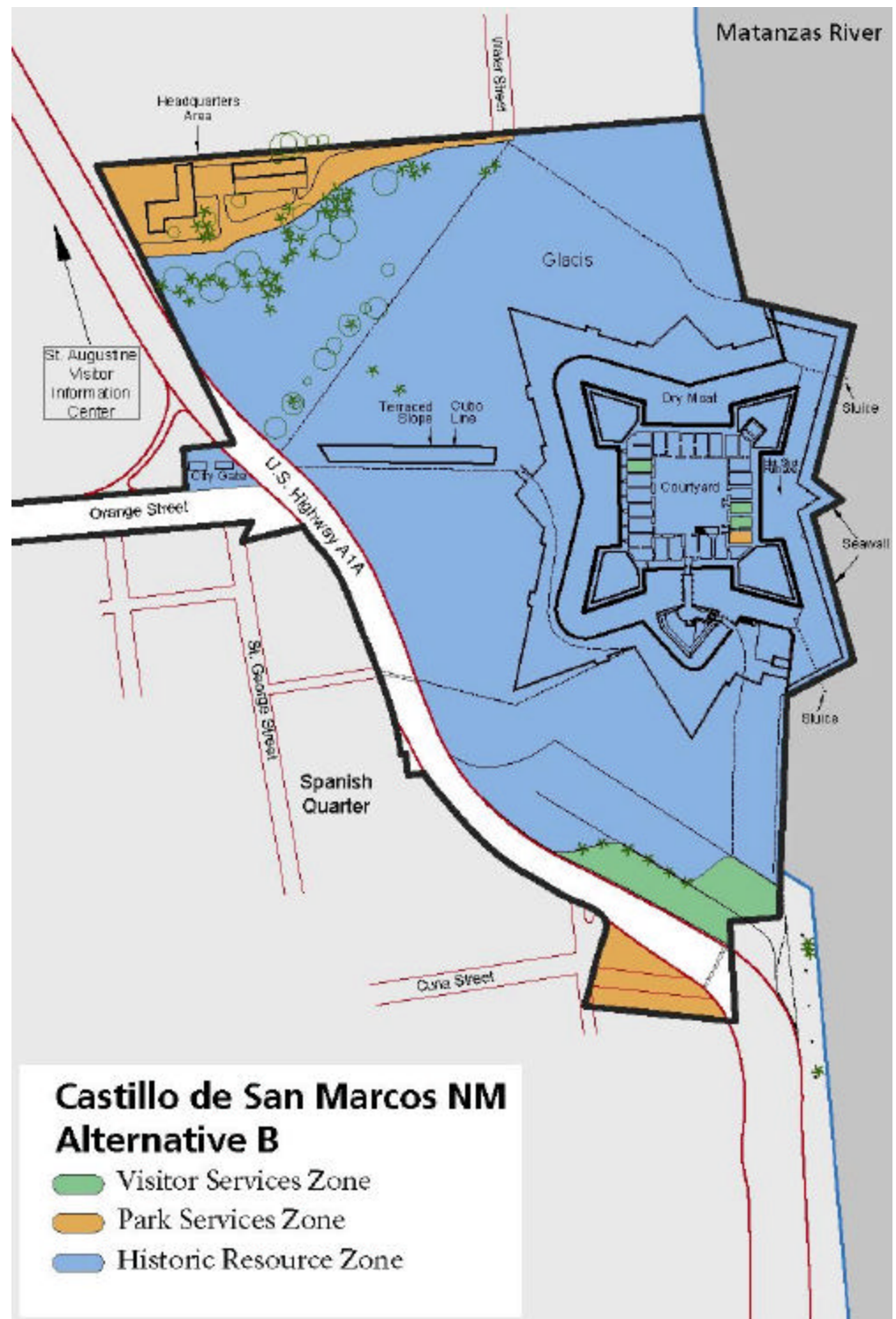
- Locate a new visitor contact station in current visitor parking area.
- There would be minimal visitor services: ticket sales and the bookstore.
- The facility would be designed to have minimal visual impact on the site.

Parking

- Reduce size of current visitor parking lot.
- Restore historic glacis into current visitor parking area.
- Visitor parking would be available in the planned new city parking facilities behind the St. Augustine Visitor Information Center.



In this alternative, the bookstore (right) would be removed from the fort and relocated to a visitor contact station in the existing visitor parking lot (left as seen from the top of the fort).



Alternative C

General Theme

The focus of this alternative is the same as "Alternative B" but with less emphasis on restoring the landscape and more emphasis on providing visitor services and facilities.

Visitor Experience

The visitor would have many opportunities to experience the feeling and setting of the historical period through:

- Restoration of most of the fort's casemates and partial restoration of the historic landscape; and
- Living history, costumed interpretation, period crafts, and technology demonstrations.

Resource Conditions

- Enhance the view of the fort at the Sally port by removing the ticket booth. Relocate the ticket sales function to a new visitor center.
- Remove most non-historic administrative functions from the fort including the restrooms. Restrooms would be available in the new visitor center.
- Restore most of the casemates to their historic appearance. Maintenance and administrative offices remain in current location at the north end of the site.
- Partially restore the glacis into the area of current visitor parking. The remainder of the current parking lot site would be available for the visitor center. Parking would be available across the street in the city's planned new parking garage.

Visitor Center

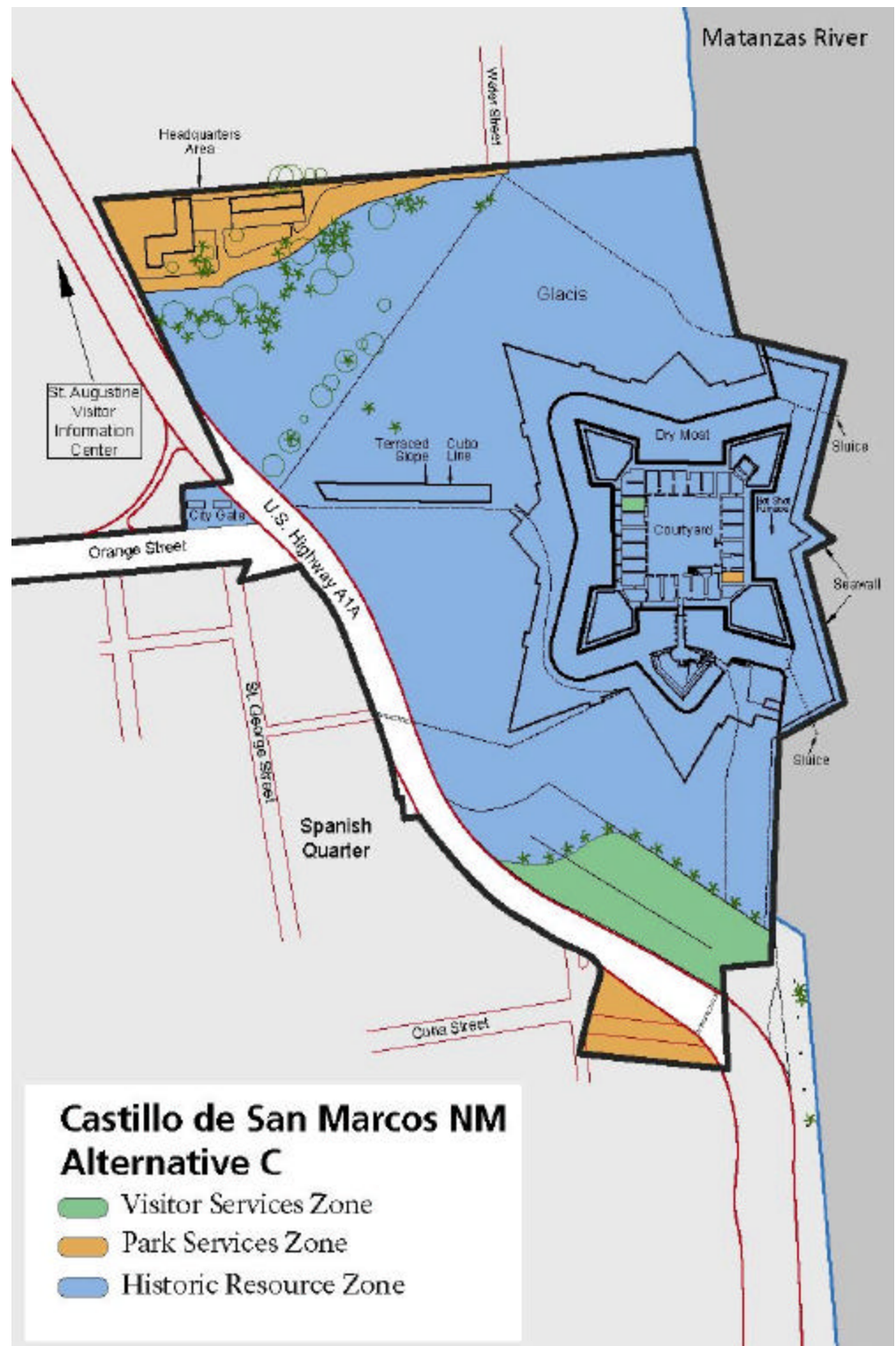
- Locate a new full-service visitor center in current visitor parking area.
- The facility would have more visual impact on the site than Alternative B.

Parking

- Reduce size of current visitor parking lot to lesser degree than Alternative B to accommodate larger visitor center.
- Restore historic glacis into current visitor parking area.
- Visitor parking would be available in the planned new city parking facilities behind the St. Augustine Visitor Information Center.



In this alternative, the restrooms (right) and administrative offices (left) would be removed from the fort and relocated to a new visitor center and an expanded or adapted headquarters building respectively.



Alternative D

General Theme

Alternative D moves visitor facilities completely off the site in partnership with the City of St. Augustine. This alternative would enhance visitor services through expanded facilities in the St. Augustine historic district and interpretation of the civilian as well as the military aspects of daily life in St. Augustine during the first Spanish period. Last year a bill was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives to create a visitor education center for the Castillo in partnership with the City of St. Augustine. Although Alternative C, and to a lesser degree Alternative A, are compatible with the bill, this alternative is designed specifically with that legislation in mind.

Visitor Experience

- The visitor would have ample opportunities to learn about both the military history of the Castillo and the civilian experience in the Spanish Quarter.
- The visitor would also have a variety of experiences related to the total historic tourism experience of St. Augustine, especially the Spanish Quarter.

Resource Conditions

- The ticket sales function would be relocated away from the sally port to the visitor parking lot.
- There would be no other significant changes to the landscape or to the casemates, with the exception of the removal and relocation of the bookstore and Eastern National office.

Visitor Center

- A new, full-service visitor education center would be located off-site convenient to Castillo and the Spanish Quarter.
- The NPS and the City would jointly operate new visitor education center.

Parking

- There would be no change from current conditions.
- The existing parking lot would remain.
- Additional visitor parking would be available in new city parking facilities behind the St. Augustine Visitor Information Center.



In this alternative, the parking lot (left) remains in place and changes to the fort's grounds (right) would be minimal.

